

Message Text

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SUBJ: EDITORIAL IN IRISH TIMES MAY 4, 1977

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN IRISH TIMES ON MAY 4,
1977 UNDER HEADING A TIME TO TALK:

THE MENDING OF FENCES - OR, TO USE A WORD WHICH IS MORE
FAMILIAR IN THE IRISH CONTEXT, "RECONCILIATION" - IS
THE OBJECT OF THE MEETING WHICH STARTED YESTERDAY BETWEEN
DELEGATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AND VIETNAM IN PARIS.
THIS IS THE FIRST OFFICIAL ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE PARTIES
SINCE THE FALL OF SAIGON TWO YEARS AGO. NOW THERE IS A
NEW PRESIDENT IN WASHINGTON, AND THE FORM OF VIETNAM HAS
CHANGED, SO THAT WHAT USED TO BE THE SOUTH IS BEING
GOVERNED BY THE NORTH - A DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAD BEEN
TRAGICALLY OBVIOUS LONG BEFORE THE WAR ENDED.

AFTER THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PARIS TALKS, THE AMERICAN
UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS
DECLARED THAT THE DISCUSSION HAD BEEN "FRANK, FRIENDLY
AND VERY USEFUL." IT IS EASY TO MAKE FUN OF DIPLOMATIC
LANGUAGE OF THIS KIND, WHICH SEEMS STILTED BUT, AT THE
SAME TIME, IS A CODE. A WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
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THE AMERICANS AND THE VIETNAMESE WOULD MARK THE KIND OF
NEW START WITH WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER IS OBVIOUSLY, AND
RIGHTLY, CONCERNED.

IF VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES CAN COME TO TERMS,
THEY WILL HAVE PROVIDED A LESSON IN POLITICAL THERAPY
FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD. AND IF THEY DO NOTHING ELSE,

THEY WILL MAKE THE POINT THAT IT IS BETTER TO LIVE TOGETHER THAN TO LIVE APART. THEY HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO, HOWEVER, BEFORE THEY COME TO THOSE TERMS - THICH EVENTUALLY MUST INCLUDE THE RECOVERY OF MISSING US SERVICEMEN, THE PROVISION OF RECONSTRUCTION AID, THE LIFTING OF THE VETO ON VIETNAMESE MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER OR NOT THE ATTEMPT AT PEACE-MAKING (FOR SUCH IT IS) WILL SUCCEED. THE DROPPING OF PRE-CONDITIONS GIVES SOME CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM. SOMETHING AS IMPORTANT AS AN ABANDONMENT OF ENMITY AND MISUNDERSTARNDING BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES MUST MARK AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE IN THE HEART AS WELL AS IN THE PERPETUALLY DOUBTING MIND. KRENE

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